

QUO VADIS THE ECO - MANAGEMENT AND AUDIT SCHEME (EMAS)?

Jozef Majerčák - Peter Majerčák

jozef.majercak@fpedas.utc.sk, peter.majercak@fpedas.utc.sk,

*University of Zilina, Faculty of Operation and Economics of Transport and
Communication, Univerzitna 1, 010 26 Zilina, Slovakia.*

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Resumé: *In the Slovak Republic begins process, within the scope of which, many producers optionally approach to the implementation of system of environmental oriented operation and audit EMAS built in organizations according by law NR SR č. 468/2002 about system of environmental oriented operation and audit EMAS. Inseparable part of system EMAS is functional existence of norm STN EN ISO 14 001 EMS.*

The European Union (EU) Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) is a management tool for companies and other organisations to evaluate, report and improve their environmental performance. This scheme has been available for participation by companies since 1995 and was originally restricted to companies in industrial sectors.

Since 2001 EMAS has been open to all economic sectors including public and private services. In addition, EMAS was strengthened by the integration of EN/ISO 14001 as the environmental management system required by EMAS, by adopting an attractive EMAS logo for demonstrating EMAS registration to the outside world, and by considering indirect effects such as those related to financial services or administrative and planning decisions in a stronger sense. Furthermore, Member States and the EU are now asked to create new benefits and incentives for registered organisations, for example in the areas of public procurement and by reducing unnecessary duplication of efforts in relation to other environmental legislation .

To understand the impact an environmental management system (EMS) can have on the environment it is necessary to clearly understand what an EMS is and the impacts it can have within the organisation which has implemented it . An EMS is defined in EMAS II to be *“the part of the overall management system that includes the organisational structure, planning activities, responsibilities, practices, procedures, processes and resources for developing, implementing, achieving, reviewing and maintaining the environmental policy.”* In a continuous process, organisations have to evaluate their environmental impact and to set targets for improvement.

The EU instrument "**Eco-Management and Audit Scheme**" (EMAS) provides a comprehensive strategy for environmental management in companies and a good vehicle for a voluntary participation of the private sector. It focuses on the introduction of voluntary approaches in companies and therefore directly involves them in the implementation of environmental norms. Introduction of EMAS in the candidate countries should significantly contribute to the fulfillment of this objective. Moreover, as EMAS is directly applicable at accession, the candidate countries need to establish the institutional structures necessary for EMAS management.

The **Sixth Environmental Action Programme** of the European Communities asks for development of a wide range of tools aimed at helping businesses understand the EC environmental requirements and how they should be met. This should include, *inter alia*, guidelines on complying with different legislation. The EMAS Guide submitted represents fulfilment of the given tasks. It includes concrete experience gained during implementation of the Project and recommendations on how a strategy and an institutional structure for the promotion of EMAS in a candidate country could be developed. It also describes experience with the provision of support to the chemical companies for their EMAS registration.

Experience, proposals and recommendations provided in this guide shall not be deemed to represent the only feasible, and/or correct procedure of EMAS development. Specific conditions of each candidate country - e.g. arrangement of governmental and local authorities, current status, development and orientation of the manufacturing and service sectors, environmental and other legislation - must always be considered. Nevertheless, the authors are convinced that development of a strategy to promote EMAS, development of a proper institutional structure of the scheme and enlargement of a number of EMAS-registered companies can be facilitated using information provided in this guide.

EMAS FEATURES

The Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (hereafter simply referred to as the “EMAS”) is one of the voluntary activities of organisations leading to the improvement of the influence of their activities on the environment and the provision of the appropriate information to the public and the other participating subjects.

The aim of the programme is mainly the support for the constant improvements in the influence of the activities of the organisation on the environment by means of

- the creation and implementation of an environmental management system (EMS) within the organisation,
- the functioning and effectiveness of these systems, which are systematic, objective and regularly evaluated,
- regularly informing the public and the other participating parties of the influence of the activities of the EMAS organisations on the environment in the form of the environmental statement,
- the integration of the workers at the organisations with the implemented EMAS into active participation in the activities associated with the functioning of the EMAS.

The aim of the Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) is to promote continuous environmental improvements. It is a voluntary scheme designed to support organisations which continuously improve their environmental performance and which wish to have these efforts registered and made public in a credible manner. Organisations that have implemented an environmental management system and produced an independently-verified public statement about their environmental performance can also register under this scheme.

The EMAS Regulation No 1836/93, introduced in June 1993, has been put into operation in the Member States in April 1995. Originally, the scheme was open to the manufacturing industry and utilities only. In 2001, a revised European scheme was adopted based on the experiences of all companies which participated in EMAS.

The new EMAS

The European Parliament and the Council Regulation (EC) No 761/2001 of 19 March 2001, allowing voluntary participation by organisations in a Community eco-management and audit scheme (EMAS) has been modified to include **all** sectors of economic activity.

Furthermore, the new regulation contains a number of improvements for the participating companies:

- *Flexible use of an EMAS logo, will make it easier for EMAS registered organisations to raise their environmental profile.*
- *The relation between EMAS and ISO/EN ISO 14001 (International/European Standard for Environmental Management System) has been clarified: The environmental management system as a part of EMAS is based on the procedures applied in the Section 4 of ISO/EN ISO 14001.*
- *Instead of separate registration of each site, EMAS now allows registration on the basis of the concept of organisation.*

The Essentials criterion of this concept is not the physical location of the entity to be registered, but the managerial control over the significant environmental impacts from the top management point of view.

The EMAS Regulation applies to all 15 EU Member States and 3 European Economic Area Member States (Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein). An increasing number of candidate countries is also implementing the scheme in preparation for their EU accession.

EMAS logo

One of the core elements of the revised EMAS is the introduction of various forms of communication of environmental information to stakeholders. To facilitate this, the EMAS logo has been introduced.

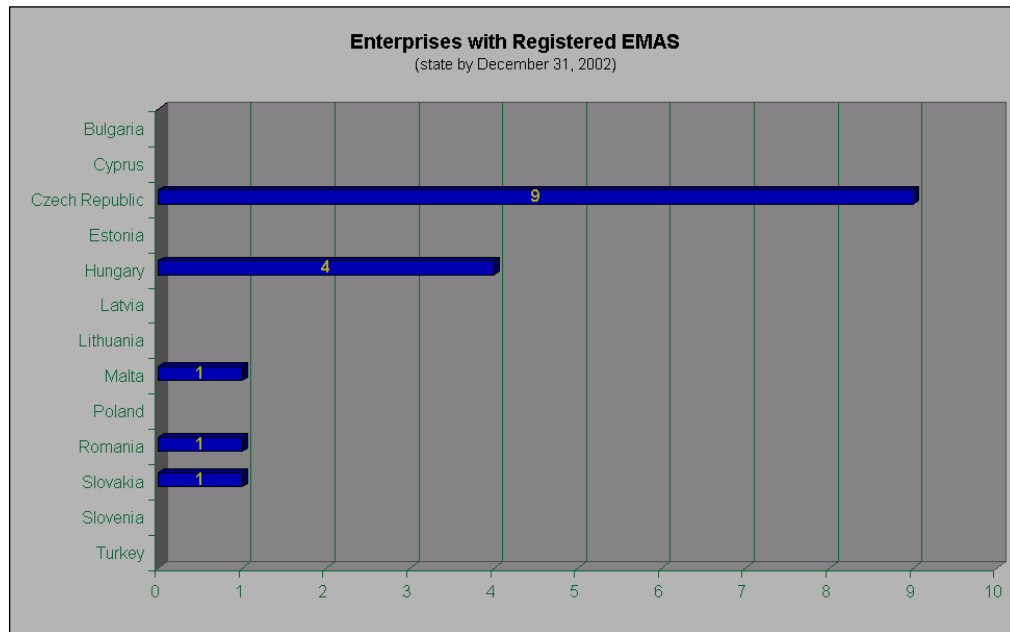
The EMAS logo is a trademark of the Regulation No 761/2001. Its functions are to:

- Indicate the reliability and credibility of information provided by an organisation with regard to its environmental performance;
- Indicate an organisation's commitment to improvement of its environmental performance and to the sound management of its environmental aspects;
- Raise awareness of the scheme amongst the general public, interested parties and organisations willing to improve their environmental performance.

Two logos have been introduced, Version 1 for "Verified Environmental Management", and Version 2 for "Validated Information".



Graph No.1 - Enterprises with validated (registered) EMAS



Source: CEI, Umweltbundesamt

Organisations participating in EMAS with current EMAS registration may now use the EMAS logo to publicise and promote their involvement in the scheme. The logo may not be used in product advertising, on products and or their packaging. The EMAS logo may not be used by itself. Overall, EMAS has got a positive impact on improving competitiveness of organisations, since there is an ever-increasing pressure by customers for implementation of the system of environmental management as a tool for achievement of an optimum environmental profile.

The environmental management system for organisations means a systematic approach to the protection of the environment in all aspects of business, via which the organisations integrate care for the environment into their company strategies and regular operations.

The approach involves the creation, implementation and maintenance of a suitably structured management system for the organisation, which is part of the overall system of management and involves all the elements of the positive behaviour of the enterprise with regard to the environment.

The result of the implementation of EMAS is both a contribution to the permanent growth and prosperity of the organisation and the gradual reduction in the negative impact of the organisation's activities, products or services on the environment.

The main benefits of an organisation's functioning environmental management system include a reduction in operating costs, savings in energy, raw materials and other resources, reductions in the risk of accidents in the environment for which the organisation is responsible, increased entrepreneurial credibility for investors, financial institutions, insurance companies and the state sector and increased options within the area of exports and the area of state tenders, business support and strengthened ties with the public

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